

**An Incident in the Life of a Trap-door Spider.**—About 10.30 a.m. on April 19, 1948, we noticed one of the red-fanged trap-door spiders (*Missulena hoggi*) travelling over the surface at the edge of the scrub near our garden. It was a medium-sized individual and a striking object in the sunlight with its shining black legs, palps and black thorax, furry blue abdomen and scarlet fangs. These were rather dull on the surface, but luminous, with an inward glow. While drinking morning coffee we watched him. Full of purpose he made south-east-ward, passing under the fence, but turned back and appeared to give one particular area some little attention, then left it and moved along past the next fence post. Here he became really interested, turning right about face, casting around and criss-crossing, tapping the ground with his palps, seeming to spread his legs wider, and press his body to the ground as he moved slower and slower. Suddenly leaves and earth heaved up behind him and the head and thorax of a monstrous female shot out, lurching sideways, the great fangs taking him by one back leg, holding him for a still second, as much as to say, "Were you looking for me?" then quietly took him in, and the door closed down. Although it was a love scene the impression was night-marish. We dug them up, the male jumping out as soon as the surface was disturbed, but the female was found 16 inches down in the very stony ground. The trap of this den was only a flimsy silken flap under the loose earth and leaves, there being very little evidence of silk lining in the shaft and no refuse was seen at the bottom. The surface of the ground had recently been scrubbed here and this may have destroyed the original door, the one found possibly being a makeshift, but the flimsy silken trap we found nearby last year, when we disturbed the sequence of a very similar incident, was in undisturbed ground. The female when found was not as large as we expected—she appeared enormous when she burst out. In colouring the abdomen was dusky with a suggestion of greyish-lilac, fangs having red colouring only at the base, particularly underneath, and this a deep ruby colour. A whitish band is conspicuous behind the fangs and whitish bars appear on the underside of the legs, similar bars appearing on the legs of the male. The female is broad and powerfully made, with the head and body over an inch in length and nearly half as broad.

The specimens were identified by Mr. L. Glauert, of the W.A. Museum. In addition to those seen here males have been observed at the Margaret River and at Lower Chittering—almost invariably in the autumn or early winter. Two individuals were seen here on June 19, one of which was followed for a considerable distance without result.

—W. H. and MARIE LOARING, "Wood St. Mars," Bickley